

Sustaining Vital Connections between Nonprofits and Their Faith Communities:



Reading Assignments and Discussion Questions

Assigned Reading:

Executive Summary: Summary of Findings from the Study, Maintaining Vital Connections Between Faith Communities and their Organizations (2009). Faith and Organizations Project report.
Download from: www.faithandorganizations.umd.edu/pdfs/ExecutiveSummary.pdf

Comparing Strategies to Maintain Connections Between Faith Communities and Organizations Across Religions (2010). Faith and Organizations Project report.
Download from:
www.faithandorganizations.umd.edu/pdfs/OverviewReportOnProjectFindings.pdf
Choose 2 out of the 6 religions covered in the report: African American, Catholic, Evangelical, Jewish, Mainline Protestant, and Quaker

Strategies Series (2010): Documents providing guidance for faith-based organizations on topics such as leadership transitions, fundraising and support, board appointments, staffing decisions, engaging volunteers, addressing conflicts, and organizational survival.
Download from:
http://student-iat.ubalt.edu/students/byrnes_a/faith-orgs/umd3/strategies.html
Choose 2 documents

Ammerman, Nancy T. (2005). *Pillars of Faith: American Congregations and Their Partners*. Berkeley: University of California Press. **Chapters 1, 5, 6**

Schneider, Jo Anne (2007). Organizing Faith-Based Service. *Journal of Family and Community Ministries*.
Download from:
www.faithandorganizations.umd.edu/pdfs/organizing_fb_services.pdf

Unruh, Heidi and Ronald Sider (2005). *Saving Souls, Serving Society: Understanding the Faith Factor in Church-Based Ministry*. New York: Oxford University Press. **Chapter 6**

OR

Sider, Ronald J., Heidi Rolland Unruh (2004). Typology of Religious Characteristics of Social Service and Educational Organizations and Programs. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 33(1)109-134

Supplemental Sources:

[See the reference lists in *Comparing Strategies to Maintain Connections* for sources specific to various faith traditions]

- Bane, Mary Jo, Brent Coffin and Ronald Thieman, eds. (2000). *Who Will Provide: The Changing Role of Religion in American Social Welfare*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Bane, Mary Jo, Brent Coffin and Richard Higgins (2005). *Taking Faith Seriously*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Chaves, Mark (2004). *Congregations in America*. Cambridge, MA and New York: Harvard University Press.
- Cnaan, Ram A. Stephanie Boddie, Femida Handy, Gaynor Yancey and Richard Schneider (2002). *The Invisible Hand: American Congregations and the Provision of Welfare*. New York: New York University Press.
- Demerath, N. Jay III et al., eds. (1998). *Sacred Companies: Organizational Aspects of Religion and Religious Aspects of Organizations*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dudley, Carl S. (2002). *Community Ministry: New Challenges, Proven Steps to Faith-Based Initiatives*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute.
- Esbeck, Carl, Stanley Carlson-Thies, and Ron Sider (2004). *The Freedom of Faith-Based Organizations to Staff on a Religious Basis*. Annapolis: Center for Public Justice.
- Granade, Nelson (2006). *Lending Your Leadership: How Pastors Are Redefining Their Role in Community Life*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute.
- Jeavons, Thomas (1994). *When the Bottom Line is Faithfulness: Management of Christian Service Organizations*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Queen, Edward, ed. (2000). *Serving Those in Need: A Handbook for Managing Faith-Based Human Services Organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Schneider, Jo Anne (2006). *Social Capital and Welfare Reform: Organizations, Congregations and Communities*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Simon, Charles (2009). *Building a Successful Volunteer Culture: Finding Meaning in Service in the Jewish Community*. Jewish Lights Publishing.
- Skjegstad, Joy (2002). *Starting a Nonprofit at Your Church*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute.
- Wittberg, Patricia (2006). *From Piety to Professionalism - And Back? Transformations of Organized Religious Virtuosity*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Wuthnow, Robert (2004). *Saving America? Faith-Based Services and the Future of Civil Society*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Wuthnow, Robert & John H. Evans, eds. (2002). *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Discussion Questions on Assigned Reading:

1. Consider the three study questions relating to "faith communities," on the first page of the Executive Summary. What do you consider your primary faith community (e.g., a specific congregation, denomination, religious tradition)? Why might this study be of interest to church leaders in your faith community? Identify several nonprofit organizations that have been founded by, affiliated with or "under the care of" your faith community. In general, have the relationships between the faith community and its nonprofits been getting stronger, weaker, or changing in any other way—or are they too diverse to generalize?
2. What are the main similarities and distinctions between the two religions you selected to read from the report *Comparing Strategies to Maintain Connections Between Faith Communities and Organizations Across Religions*, in terms of their approach to service and justice work? What are the key values embedded in each tradition? How does looking at these religious groups from the perspective of stewardship strategies and practical theology (as defined in the Faith and Organizations Project Executive Summary) help you understand better the organizations founded by these groups?
3. How do the Strategies Series documents you chose to read relate to your ministry context? Which suggestions could be most applicable? Describe a case study from your own experience of how a faith-based nonprofit handled an issue addressed in a Strategy document, and how this impacted its connection with the faith community. Is strengthening the relationship between a FBO and its faith community always the goal, in your opinion? When might one of the parties want to diminish or sever this connection?
4. Drawing on Ammerman, discuss the role of the relationship between congregations and nonprofits in the American social safety net. What are the main strengths, limitations and challenges in this relationship? How do these attributes differ based on different faith traditions? How can public policies best support or build on this relationship? What do church leaders need to understand about this relationship in order to be better equipped to carry out the mission of their church?
5. How could understanding the different models for organizing faith-based service, as described in the Schneider article, help someone trying to develop faith community support for a new outreach program? How does your theology influence your service delivery model? Discuss how the concept of social capital (see p. 7) helps shed light on the Faith and Organizations Project finding that maintaining strong connections with the faith community helps FBOs to thrive. Identify how social capital is present in your ministry context. What does it mean as a ministry leader to be a good steward of social capital?
6. What are the uses and limitations of typologies of faith-based organizations such as the one in Sider and Unruh? How does this typology intersect with the stewardship systems identified by the Faith and Organizations Project? Why is it important *not* to think of faith-based characteristics in terms of a linear spectrum or degrees of religiosity? How might particular *programs* connect differently with the faith community than *organizations*? Think of a ministry with which you have been involved and identify where it would best fit in this typology. What stewardship strategies might be most appropriate to this type of ministry?
7. Identify 2-3 leadership challenges that emerged in the readings that are relevant to your context. What conceptual or practical tools and strategies have you learned to help address these challenges? What concrete steps would you recommend for your ministry context?



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